

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Department of Vermont Health Access

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Additional Vermont Health Connect Enrollment and Extension Information Now Available

WINOOSKI, VT – Vermont Health Connect, Blue Cross and MVP today outlined details of the additional enrollment options announced last week by Governor Shumlin to give peace of mind to Vermonters as they make health care decisions in the coming months. Fact sheets now available at VermontHealthConnect.gov provide greater clarity on how to take advantage of the various enrollment channels.

“This is all about giving Vermonters information, time and options when making health care decisions,” said Commissioner of the Department of Vermont Health Access Mark Larson. “We’ve seen many Vermonters satisfied with the plans they’ve selected through Vermont Health Connect. We also know many have been frustrated by technical issues. Vermonters now have options and time to make decisions that work for them and their families.”

Enrollment options are outlined below. Fact sheets with greater detail are available at VermontHealthConnect.gov.

- 1) Vermonters can continue to sign up for health coverage for their businesses or themselves through Vermont Health Connect – online, by phone or paper, or with the help of an in-person assister.
- 2) Vermont small businesses can enroll in Vermont Health Connect plans directly through either MVP or Blue Cross. Small businesses will receive a notice from their insurance carrier informing them of the Vermont Health Connect plan that most closely aligns with their current plan. If businesses wish to enroll in that plan, they will be billed automatically. If they wish to enroll in a different plan, enroll directly through Vermont Health Connect, or switch carriers, they need to contact their carrier by November 25, 2013.
- 3) Vermonters with individual or small business health plans will now have the option to extend their current plan for up to three months, until March 31, 2014. They will continue to pay their 2013 premium rate. Deductibles will restart on January 1, as they do for every new plan year. Taking an extension means that they will have a short plan year in 2014. They will be credited for amounts applied to the deductible after January 1 for their short 2014 plan year, *if* they continue with the same insurance carrier.
- 4) Vermonters on VHAP and Catamount, who do not qualify for Medicaid in 2014, will have their plans automatically extended to March 31, 2014. They can enroll in a new plan through Vermont Health Connect at any time before March 31, 2014.

MVP and Blue Cross will be reaching out to all of their small business clients over the next few days with instructions on how to take advantage of the available enrollment channels. Also, Vermont Health Connect staff will be reaching out to Vermonters to help them sign up for Vermont Health Connect plans. Medicaid eligible beneficiaries have already been notified that they will be automatically enrolled into the Medicaid program.

Bill Little, Vice President of MVP Vermont said, "MVP Health Care fully supports the Governor's decision to activate additional enrollment options for the residents of Vermont. We are committed to working collaboratively with the State to finalize the details as we work toward full implementation of these options."

"The focus of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont is to ensure that Vermonters have continuous coverage during this period of transition to Vermont Health Connect," said Don George, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont President and CEO. "We've worked closely with the state on how the additional options announced by Governor Shumlin will work, and now that those details have been finalized our Exchange Specialists and all Blue Cross employees are ready to assist our customers and all Vermonters in understanding their coverage options for January 1."

Website: www.VermontHealthConnect.gov Toll-Free Call Center: (855) 899-9600

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